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Note verbale dated 24 February 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, on instructions from its Government, has the honour to convey the following information.

By its letter of 26 January 2006, the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco drew your attention to the seriousness of the actions being taken by the other parties in the buffer strip voluntarily established to the east of the berm after the ceasefire was declared on 6 September 1991.

That letter emphasized, among other things, that "the Kingdom of Morocco believes that all these activities are completely illegal, as those perpetrating them are acting without authority".

Unfortunately, the other parties have persisted in this course of provocation. Indeed, the Kingdom of Morocco has just learned that they are preparing to organize, on Tuesday, 28 February 2006, on the eastern side of the berm, a march consisting of 3,000 to 4,000 people brought expressly for this purpose from the Tindouf camps and accompanied by so-called foreign guests. The other parties plan to have the marchers cross over the berm.

The Kingdom of Morocco considers that this demonstration is of an extremely serious and provocative nature. It clearly represents a flagrant violation of the ceasefire, since such marches are normally supervised by Frente POLISARIO soldiers dressed as civilians.

As you yourself pointed out in your report of 13 October 2005 (S/2005/648), such activities "have contributed to increased tensions on the ground and may result in incidents and a deterioration of the situation along the berm".

The use of people from the Tindouf camps for this demonstration represents a violation of the rules of international humanitarian law, which stress the need to respect the dignity of such populations and forbid their exploitation for political propaganda operations.

Moreover, this demonstration places the lives of the participants at serious risk, given the status and nature of the buffer strip. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in a letter dated 29 March 2005 addressed to the Permanent Mission of

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the Kingdom, indicated that it was "aware of the dangers to which demonstrators are exposed in the restricted area", for which the organizers of the demonstration are fully responsible.

For all these reasons, the Kingdom of Morocco requests that you draw the attention of the other parties to the illegal nature of this demonstration, the danger to which they are exposing the participants and the threat it poses to the ceasefire, with its unforeseeable consequences for the stability of the region.

The Kingdom of Morocco also requests that you take such steps as may be deemed necessary to prevent these demonstrations, which are eminently political and dangerously provocative, and to give instructions to that effect to your Special Representative and the MINURSO Force Commander.

The success of your Personal Envoy's current efforts depends on the preservation of an atmosphere of calm, respect for the ongoing ceasefire and the avoidance of any action that could compromise the steps being taken to find an agreed political settlement to this regional dispute.

The Government of the Kingdom of Morocco would be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council and have it circulated as a document of the Council.